Dr. *WILLIAMS*'s SECOND SERMON AT Mr. BOYLE's Lecture. 1695.

IMPRIMATUR,

Feb. 4. 169$\frac{4}{5}$. *Guil. Lancaſter.*

The Certainty of Divine Revelation.

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *Martins in the Fields*, Feb. 4. $169\frac{4}{5}$.

BEING THE

Second of the LECTURE

For the Enſuing YEAR,

Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Eſquire.

By *JOHN WILLIAMS*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

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Heb. I. 1, 2.

God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son.

IN which Words I have obſerved there is,

I. A Deſcription given of Revelation, 'tis God's *ſpeaking*, and declaring his Will to Perſons choſen for that purpoſe.

II. The *Certainty* of it; 'tis by way of Declaration, and taken for granted, *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake*, &c.

III. The Order obſerved in delivering this Revelation; it was *at ſundry times*, and *in divers manners*: *In time paſt by the Prophets*, and *in the laſt days by his Son*. It was πολυμερῶς, in parts, and in ſeveral Periods and Manifeſtations, and πολυτρόπως, by Illapſes, Viſions, &c.

IV. The Perfection and Concluſion of all,

'tis *in the last days by his Son*; *the Heir of all things*, &c.

Under the first I have shewed,

1. What we mean by Revelation, in contradistinction to Natural Light.

2. The Possibility of it.

3. The Expedience, Usefulness, and Necessity of it.

It is the Second I am to proceed to, *viz.* The *Certainty*.

Under which I shall shew,

I. That God has reveal'd himself; or that there has been such Revelation.

II. The Difference between Pretended and Real Revelation.

III. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain such a Revelation, and have upon them all the Characters necessary and belonging to such Revelation.

I. That there has been a Divine Revelation.

What I have principally in my eye is the Proof of the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures; but for the present I shall lay that aside, and take my rise towards it from such general Principles and Observations as are founded upon Reason;

Reaſon; or ſuch particular Inſtances and Matters of Fact as manifeſtly proceeded from Revelation.

And accordingly I ſhall diſpoſe of what I have to ſay in Proof of it under theſe Four Heads; as we have for it,

1. A Rational or Moral Evidence.
2. A Natural.
3. A Traditionary or Teſtimony.
4. A Supernatural.

Firſt, Moral, Where in the firſt place I take for granted what I have before proved, *viz.* That a Divine Revelation is Expedient, Uſeful, and Neceſſary; and upon that Suppoſition ſhall attempt to prove the *Certainty* of it.

I acknowledge, where the Neceſſity is created by our own fault, there lies no obligation upon the Creator to provide a Remedy; and ſince the Neceſſity Mankind is now in, proceeded from their Apoſtacy, that Neceſſity can in reaſon be no juſt Plea for it, nor a ſufficient Excuſe in the want of it. When Man was created in ſuch a ſtate as made Revelation a neceſſary Help to his Reaſon, God immediately afforded him ſuch an extraordinary Manifeſtation of himſelf: But when he forfeited that Divine Gift, he could have no allowable Right or Claim to it; For *to*

him

him that hath, and improves what he hath, *ſhall be given*; but to *him that hath not*, and takes no care to preſerve and improve it, may juſtly be denied what was otherwiſe fit and neceſſary for him to have.

This indeed is the Caſe, if rigorouſly ſtated; but conſidering the miſerable Circumſtances Mankind were in after the Fall, more eſpecially through want of a Revelation, we may reaſonably conclude, That the Goodneſs of God would no leſs incline him to give it, than if he had been obliged to it by a ſpecial Grant, Promiſe, or Covenant. Decrees are Secrets lock'd up in the Breaſt of Almighty God; and whatever Good is therein intended, how beneficial ſoever they may be in the Event, yet afford no Satisfaction to us, till they are opened and revealed: And tho the Redemption of Mankind were decreed, and were according to Circumſtances to operate, and in due ſeaſon to be fully executed, yet what would They have been the better, if for 4000 Years together that Decree had lay hid in the Boſom of the Father, and the Decree had never been a Promiſe, and that Promiſe had never before that time been reveal'd unto them? So that had we no ſuch Promiſe upon record, as *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*; yet

yet however, we might be as ſure that there was ſome ſuch kind of Revelation made to *Adam*, ſome Promiſe of Forgiveneſs, when God did intend to Redeem him and all Mankind, as there was a Deſign to Redeem them: It being as neceſſary toward their preſent Comfort to have a Revelation of that Mercy in their Redemption, as Redemption it ſelf was neceſſary toward their Happineſs.

And this will farther be confirmed, if we conſider what has been before proved in the former Diſcourſe, That all men have had a Senſe of the Want of a Revelation; and have been poſſeſs'd with an earneſt and impatient deſire of obtaining it; which being a deſire becoming Human Nature, uſeful and fit to be cheriſh'd, it is not to be conceiv'd, that where there is proviſion made to anſwer all ſenſible and natural Appetites throughout the Creation, that this no leſs importunate, tho ſupervenient Deſire, ſhould have no regard paid to it, but be ſuffered, like *Ætna*, to be always burning within, tormenting, as it were, the Bowels of Mankind with an unquenchable Fire, or an unſatiable Deſire of knowing what was not to be known, and of obtaining what was not to be obtained. This is a State that the Conſideration of God's Goodneſs will

not admit us to ſuppoſe; and we muſt therefore neceſſarily conclude, That the ſame Divine Power and Wiſdom that made Man a Reaſonable and Inquiſitive Being, and has allowed him a World of Wonders to employ that Faculty in the Contemplation of, hath alſo provided for that Noble Deſire of knowing what the Will of his Maker is, and what relates to his own Eternal Welfare; and that is, by a Revelation. Indeed without this, 'tis with him as with one that is born Blind, that whatever other Evidence he may have of the Being of a God, wants one of the moſt convincing of all, which is, The Wonders of an Almighty Power and Incomprehenſible Wiſdom, conſpicuous in the Frame of Nature, and the viſible parts of the Creation: So whatever Senſe men, that have only Reaſon for their Guide, may have of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God; whatever they may obſerve in the Courſe of his Providence to confirm them in the Belief of it; whatever Hopes they may have of it, from the general Notion of the Divine Nature; whatever Deſire they may have of it, from a ſenſe of their own Miſery, yet they want that Evidence of it, which, as we find by conſtant experience, alone can ſatisfy and compoſe their doubtful and diſtracted Minds, and that is *Certainty*,

tainty, or, which is the ſame, *Revelation*, by which and nothing leſs, that *Certainty* is to be attained. And therefore we have juſt reaſon to believe That was not wanting to the Firſt Ages of the World: For the ſame reaſon we have to believe God to be good, the like reaſon we have to believe that he did after that manner make himſelf known in thoſe early times from the firſt to Mankind.

But it may be ſaid, What is all this Reaſoning to Matter of Fact? For if after all there has been no ſuch Revelation, or no Proof can be made of it, That is more than a Thouſand Speculative Arguments for it. And beſides, ſuppoſing there was once a Revelation, what was that to thoſe Ages and Nations that afterwards wanted it, and were condemned, as it were, to *ſit in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death*?

The laſt of theſe is not to be denied, and ſo I ſhall firſt of all conſider it. And in anſwer to it it ſhall ſuffice to ſay for the preſent, That if there has been ſuch a Revelation made known to the World, and all due care taken by the Almighty and Beneficent Creator for the Preſervation of it, and it afterwards be damnified, or corrupted, or in fine utterly loſt, through the Negligence or Perverſeneſs of men themſelves, the Fault of the Miſcarriage wholly reſts upon them. The

making known the Revelation, was an extraordinary Caſe, and is a voluntary Act of Grace and Favour in Almighty God; the Preſervation of it is the ordinary Caſe, and belongs to Men: and when once the Extraordinary Caſe becomes Ordinary, God leaves it to its proper and natural Courſe, to Second Cauſes, to Human Prudence, Care, and Inſpection.

Thus it is with Reaſon, the Nobleſt Principle of Human Nature, which if not attended and nurtur'd, may degenerate into Stupidity, and a kind of Brutality. As it has happen'd to ſome Nations in the *Southern* Parts of *Africa*, *Weſt-Tartary*, and *Weſt-Indies*, that notwithſtanding the Characters of an Almighty Being legibly ſtamped upon the Face of the whole and every part of the Creation, have ſo far degenerated, that it has been queſtioned, Whether they have had any Notion or Senſe of a God, or any ſort of Worſhip for him. And ſo it is in the caſe before us: For as God had made a ſpecial Revelation of himſelf to *Adam* after as well as before the Fall, ſo he took a very effectual way for the Conveyance and Preſervation of it, by the Longævity of thoſe Patriarchs with whom it was depoſited, and who were to take care that it might be preſerved inviolable: Three of which alone

alone fill'd up the firſt Period of 1656 Years, from the Creation to the Flood; *viz. Adam*, *Methuſelah*, and *Noah*: So that *Methuſelah* lived 243 Years with *Adam*, (for ſo old was he when *Adam* died); and *Noah* lived 600 Years with *Methuſelah* (for ſo old was *Noah* when *Methuſelah* died, and the Flood came). And Four again of the Fathers after the Flood (tho the Extent of their Lives was ſhortned) fell in with the 856 Years from the Flood to the giving of the Law by *Moſes* at *Sinai*: So that *Abraham* is ſuppoſed to have lived 150 Years with *Shem*, *Jacob* about 20 with *Abraham*, *Levi* 60 Years with *Jacob*, and *Amram* the Father of *Moſes* lived in the Time of his Grandfather *Levi*.

Now what courſe, in the Circumſtances and the State the World was at that time in, could be more fit, if duly obſerved, for conveying the matter of a Revelation through the ſeveral Periods and Ages of the World, ſo far as Perſonal Teaching was ſufficient?

And eſpecially, when the Things revealed, and after this manner to be delivered from Age to Age, were of Importance ſufficient to oblige both Teacher and Scholar; and withal ſo Few, as might without any Difficulty be retained. And therefore, if notwithſtanding the Method taken by Almighty God for the regiſtring what he

he had revealed in the memories of men, and for delivering it down to future Ages, there was afterwards no care taken on their part, and no reaſonable proviſion made for conſerving ſuch a Revelation, but that in proceſs of time, it was either totally obliterated, or vilely corrupted, the Miſcarriage was (as I have ſaid) wholly chargeable upon ſuch as by their Negligence or Wickedneſs *made* Mankind *to ſin*, in not delivering, or not faithfully delivering down to Poſterity what they themſelves had received in its Original Purity from their Anceſtors. The Caſe is indeed very lamentable, but what is not to be helped, without Almighty God alters the Nature of things, turns them out of their proper and ordinary Courſe, and acts ſolely by his own Power and Prerogative, either without or above the Agency of Second Cauſes. Which is no more with reaſon to be expected, than that when God has made the Earth in its own nature Fertile, and capable of yielding all things neceſſary for man's ſubſiſtence, with Cultivation; that He ſhould alſo be obliged to continue it in the ſame ſtate it was created in; and when by the Sloth and Stupidity of men it brought forth nothing but Thorns and Thiſtles, ſhould miraculouſly make every Tree that is *pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food*,

food, and whatever was beneficial and neceſſary, to grow out of the Ground, as at firſt, and before there was a *Man to till the ground*. Now if this be unreaſonable for Man to expect, it is ſo then in the caſe of Revelation, which God had committed to the Cuſtody of Men themſelves, and made them whoſe Intereſt it was, to be the Conſervators of it.

Having thus far conſidered the Caſe of thoſe that had not, or have no Revelation, I ſhall return to the Main Point, which is, To ſhew that there has been ſuch a Revelation. And that brings me to the

2*d*. Sort of Proof, which I call *Natural*, as it belongs to things Natural, and is oppoſed to what is of mere Inſtitution, (which I conceive to be equivalent to Revelation): And they are Speech, common Notions, and Miracles.

1. *Speech*: For which there is in Man a Natural Capacity, and Organs admirably contrived and diſpoſed (as we ſee by experience). But now there is a vaſt difference in that caſe betwixt Us and other Creatures; for other Creatures have not only Organs as we have, fitted for their proper Notes, but at once have all thoſe Organs in Tune and in Operation; ſo that whatever they would ſignify in their

their way, and according to their kind, they immediately thereby expreſs: But tho the Organs of Speech in us are as exquiſitely framed, yet we gradually grow up to the uſe of them; and again, can never apply them, or know how to uſe them, without ſome precedent Inſtruction. And therefore it has been the Opinion of many, That without hearing others ſpeak, we ſhould be eternally dumb *; and as the Experiment of *Pſammeticus* King of *Egypt* ſhews †, (if true) of ſhutting up Two Children in ſeparate Caves, where they never heard one Articulate Word, and ſo could uſe none.

* *V. Poſtellus. lib. de Orig. c. 4.*
† *Herodotus. Euterpe. c. 2.*

So that now Man muſt be taught, and as he is taught, ſo he ſpeaks. But we will put the caſe in which there was no Human Inſtructor, and yet the Perſon ſpoke as articulately, and had the free uſe of Words, and knew as well how to expreſs his mind by them from the very firſt, as if he had had the beſt Helps for it in the world, and had been never ſo long a time verſed and practiſed in it; and that Perſon was *Adam*, who was created in a full Age, and had none before him; and yet muſt as ſoon have Words for uſe, and Skill how to uſe them, as he had to give Names to the Creatures, according to their ſeveral kinds. For without this, what Converſation could

could he have with *Eve*, or what Comfort could he take in her preſence, (for it was not to be call'd Society); and what a Dejection muſt there be in each of them, when all Creatures had their Notes according to the Species they were of, but they themſelves alone were mute. So that tho 'tis not expreſly ſaid, That *Adam* and *Eve* had any Diſcourſe, yet 'tis as certain from the reaſon of the thing, as it is that God ſpake to them, or the Serpent and *Eve* ſpake together. But 'tis certain *Adam* muſt then be ſelf-inſtructed, or be inſtructed by God: He muſt then invent a Language of himſelf, or he muſt be taught by him that made him. If he was to teach himſelf, how could he know that he was able to ſpeak; or how can we think he would begin his Converſation by an attempt that way? For 'tis highly probable, that they would firſt have began with dumb ſigns, or ſome external motions (as we ſee thoſe ordinarily do, that have no Words which others can underſtand); or if he ſhould at length have found out ſuch an Expedient, and formed ſome Articulate Sounds, yet what a tedious courſe would this have been, and how long before it could be wrought into a Language, that they could firſt Think of Words, and then Remember them, and then Uſe them, and then

fall into Diſcourſe? Don't we find how difficult it is to learn to ſpeak a Language, when we have all Advantages for it, by Inſtruction and Diſcourſe with thoſe that ſpeak it? But ſuppoſe Two Perſons wholly ſtrangers to one another, and of a Language as different as *Chineſe* and *Engliſh*, ſhould meet together, and be conſtrained by Circumſtances, being without other Society, to converſe with each other; tho each had a Language of their own, and knew how to ſpeak and form Words for Pronunciation, yet how long would it be before they could fix the Words for it, and to have a Term for every thing they were to diſcourſe about; to invent and agree upon it, and then to remember them, and then to uſe them? And then much more will the difficulties increaſe, were theſe Two in the caſe of *Adam* and *Eve*, and to beat out the Track which never any walked in before; to invent Speech it ſelf, and Words to be ſpoken, and ſufficient to expreſs the Thoughts of each other, ſo as to make Company, and that Company agreeable, acceptable, and uſeful. This muſt have been the work of Time, if it had been practicable; and the Difficulty of it would have made each others Company a Burden rather than a Pleaſure, till ſuch time as they could come to a mutual

tual understanding of one anothers minds and inclinations. And therefore to make them meet Helps for each other, it was of Necessity that they should have an extraordinary Power communicated from Heaven, and be enabled by that Instinct as soon to speak, as the other Creatures are in a course of Nature to utter such Voices as are suitable to their kind, or as Mankind are to express their Passions of Joy or Sorrow, by Laughter or Tears.

So that 'tis not without reason, I rank the Gift of Speech among those things that are of a Divine Infusion, and so equivalent to Revelation.

II. Another Instance of this kind, is what is usually called Common Notions, or Natural Impressions: *Common Notions*, because they are common to all Mankind; and *Natural Impressions*, because they are conceiv'd not to be acquired by any Human Means, such as Education and Instruction, Observation and Experience; but are imprinted on our Nature by an Immediate and Supernatural Power.

That there are such Notions as all Mankind do agree in, is undeniable; such as the Belief of a God, an Adoration to be given to him; and that there is an essential difference between Good and

Evil, ſo that Good cannot by any art or endeavour be made or eſteemed to be Evil, nor Evil Good: For as the Natures of the things themſelves cannot be altered, ſo neither can our Conceptions of them.

It is as undeniable, That theſe Notions or Impreſſions are ſo early to be diſcovered, and do ſo grow up with our Reaſon, that they ſeem not to be the Effects of our Reaſon, but rather to be antecedent to it; and that it is rather what we Find, than what we Chuſe; what belongs to our Nature, than what we add to it. And accordingly as we have a Notion, ſo a Senſe of thoſe things, antecedent to all Reaſoning and Inſtruction, which we call Conſcience, excuſing or elſe accuſing, according to the nature of the things, whether good or evil. Now as the Nature of the things muſt be before our Conception of them, ſo both muſt be before we paſs this practical Judgment upon them: And if we do exerciſe this Faculty antecedent to all Inſtruction, then ſo muſt the Senſe of the things be, about which it is exerciſed. So the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 14. *When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves: Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing*

bearing Witneſs, &c. Which is exactly agreeable to the Phraſe of the Wiſeſt among them; So *Ariſtotle* calls it, the *Natural*, *Common*, and *Unwritten Law*. Ad Nicom. *l.* 4. *c.* 5. *l.* 5. *c.* 9. *l.* 8. *c.* 1. Rhet. *l.* 1. *c.* 10, 13, 15.

But above all, *Cicero* (who beſt knew the ſenſe of the Philoſophers, and how to expreſs it) doth ſpeak fully to this point, both as to the Univerſality of theſe First Notions, and the agreement in them by all mankind; both as to the nature and riſe of them. *There is*, ſaith he, *a certain Law, not written, but native to us, which we have not learned, received, nor read: But we have taken and derived it from Nature it ſelf; to which we were not Taught to be conformed, but Made; it was not by Inſtitution, but Infuſion.* Pro Milone. This, in another place, he ſaith all men have by a *certain Anticipation*, and calls them *innate Cogitations*; and will allow it to come from no leſs a Power than what is Divine. *We have*, ſaith he, *received a Conſcience from the Immortal Gods, which cannot be plucked away from us.* L. 1. de Nat. Deor. & L. 2. de Legib. Pro Cluentio.

So that whatever Improvement theſe Notions and Impreſſions may receive from an after Inſtruction, yet they ſeem to be implanted in us by the ſame Power that made us reaſonable Creatures, who no more could leave himſelf without Witneſs in our Minds, than in the Works of Nature. And being thus antecedent to our own Reaſon-

Reaſoning, or other Information, can proceed from no other a Principle than Revelation doth, and is therefore equivalent to it.

III. There is a Traditionary Proof of Revelation, which is by Teſtimony, or by ſuch Inſtances as are a part of the Revelation; and of which, as I conceive, no tolerable account can be given, if they are not allowed to be of Divine Inſtitution. In order to which,

1. I obſerve, That the Want of a Revelation in any particular Nation or Age, is not an Argument ſufficient to prove that there never was any Revelation. For Revelation being more eſpecially of things not knowable by the mere Light of Nature, may be loſt, while the Light of Nature remains. It being in this caſe much as it is in Matters of Hiſtory, which may be derived from one Generation to another, and eſpecially by Regiſters and Memorials: But if a former Generation be careleſs and ſlothful, or the Records not faithfully wrote or kept, the Matters of Fact in one Age are irrecoverably loſt in the next, or turned into Fables. Of which the Earlieſt Times are too manifeſt an Inſtance; and for which reaſon *Varro* did not divide them amiſs, into ἄδηλον & μυθικὸν, *obſcure* or unknown, and *fabulous*. Which laſted till the Firſt Olympiad, and

and that was, at ſooneſt, *Anno Mundi* 3173; when the Hiſtorical Age, according to him, begins. Now as the Want of ſuch Hiſtories will not prove that there never were any ſuch, and much leſs that there were no Matters of Fact for the furniſhing ſuch Hiſtories: So tho there be no Revelation, or no Memorials of ſuch a Revelation, in ſome particular Nations or Ages, it will not neceſſarily follow that there never was any ſuch Revelation made to the World.

2. When I propoſe the Proof of a Revelation, I would not be underſtood ſo much as to ſuppoſe, That there was from the beginning, or before the Time of *Moſes*, a Pandect or Collection of Divine Revelations; but only that there were Inſpired Perſons to whom God did (as occaſion ſerved) reveal himſelf *in ſundry times and divers manners*, ſuch as *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c.

3. Where there has been or is no Revelation, or pretence to it (if any ſuch Age or People ever were) yet there are or have been in thoſe Ages or Nations, certain Footſteps of ſuch a Revelation; and which whereever they are found, are as evident Marks of ſuch a Revelation, as Pillars or Croſſes found in a Countrey at preſent uninhabited, are, that there have been ſome perſons that have been there before, and have erected thoſe Monuments.

4. I

4. I account such Usages, Rites, and Principles, to proceed from Revelation, that have no foundation in Reason, and the nature of the thing, but are correspondent to what we call Revelation; and which can well have no reason at all assign'd for them, if not the Reason given in that Revelation: Such are Expiatory Sacrifices, and other things relating to Divine Worship.

5. This is the more confirmed, if such Usages, Rites and Principles have been observed, practised, and believed, in Nations that have had no relation one to another, no Commerce or Communication, nor sometimes knowledge of one another; for then they must arise from some common Head, from whence they were aboriginally dispersed among the several Branches of the same Stock.

When one People has been mixed with another, as the *Jews* and *Egyptians*; or derived from another, as the *Colchi* from the *Egyptians*; or there have been Commerces and Confederacies, Wars and Conquests, 'tis no wonder they intermingle in several Rites and Observances. Of this we have a notorious Instance in Circumcision, which by the abovesaid means came to be received by several Nations, as the *Ethiopians*, *Egyptians*, and *Colchi*, the *Phœnicians*, and some of the

the *Syrians*, as *Herodotus* shews *. But when the Usages, Rites, and Principles have been as well found where there has been no Communication, as where there has, 'tis no less a sign they descend from one and the same Original, than when the Waters of the Seven Branches of the River *Nilus* have one and the same Taste and Colour, without any Communication, that they do all descend from the Main Stream.

* Clio. cap. 36, 37. *Euterp. cap.* 104. V. Bochart Geogr. Sacr. Phaleg. *l.* 4. *c.* 31.

In like manner, if we find, suppose, among the Seventy Nations (into which 'tis said Mankind was divided, upon the Confusion at *Babel*) several of the same Rites and Usages, generally speaking, concurring with those of what we call Revelation, we must conclude, That they were observed before that Dispersion, and were wholly owing to as early an Institution.

Among the Instances that I shall make use of for the Proof of a Revelation, I shall begin with those that relate to Divine Worship, such as Time, Sacrifices, *&c.*

1. *Time.* That there is some particular Portion of Time to be set apart for the Publick Worship of God, either by Divine Appointment, or Humane Consent, is absolutely necessary, when it is to be the Act of a Society; for Worship, without some Time for such Society to

convene and assemble in, must inevitably end in Confusion and Dissolution.

And therefore as God created the World as a Temple to exhibit and manifest himself in, and created such Beings as should in their several Stations celebrate his Praise; so when he had finished all his Work, he established that Day which he rested upon, to be from thenceforward devoted to that Service; as we may see the Institution, *Gen.* 2. 2. I call this an Institution; for when could that be more seasonably instituted by Divine Authority, than at the Close of the Creation, when the Sanctification and the Reason of it were so immediately connected; *God blessed and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work?* It being not probable that there should be at that time no Institution, when the Reason for it is expresly given; or that there should be no present Obligation to observe it, when there was an Institution. If God had no sooner finished his Work, but he *sanctified* the Day following, 'tis evident that the Obligation to observe it must begin with the Institution: And if he *sanctified* it, because on that Day he *rested*, 'tis as evident the Institution did begin with the Reason of it. And then how improbable is it that God should *bless* and *sanctify* a Particular Day,

Day, and yet for the ſpace of Two thouſand Years together ſhould leave that Day in common with the other Days of the Week, without any diſtinction? How improbable again, that it ſhould be firſt inſtituted and made a Duty to the *Jews* only for a Reaſon that equally concerned all Mankind as well as them, becauſe he *reſted*; and for a reaſon exiſtent from the firſt, as well as in the Time when it was inſtituted at *Sinai*? 'Tis highly unreaſonable to add one *Prolepſis* to another, and to heap Figure upon Figure, when there is no neceſſity for it, contrary to all the Rules of a Juſt Interpretation.

Now if this be an Original and Primæval Inſtitution, we have one Inſtance of a Divine Revelation, ſo far as the Scripture is of Authority; and ſurely we may demand in its behalf, to have as much regard paid to it as we give to Prophane Hiſtories.

But however, we are not without a concurrent Teſtimony from Them alſo in this particular. For it is manifeſt that there hath been of great Antiquity ſuch a Diſtribution of Time as we call a Week of Seven Days; and which is more to our purpoſe, That the Seventh Day was a Feſtival and Religious Day. This *Lucian* doth more than intimate; and long before him, *Solon*,

who calls it *Moſt Holy Day*, in his Elegies, quoted by *Euſebius* * ; and one earlier than he, *Homer*, who calls it, ἱερὸν ἦμαρ, *The Holy Day*. But *Calimachus*, *Homer*, and *Linus*, are ſtill more particular; for they ſay it was becauſe all the Works of Creation were then finiſhed. So *Homer*, Ἑβδομὸν ἦμαρ ἦεν, ᾧ τῶ τετέλεσο ἅπαντα ; and 'tis therefore called by *Linus*, *The Birth-day of the World*.

* Hiſt. p. 678.

Now there is nothing in Nature to point to this; for there is no more to be obſerved from the Motion of the Heavens for ſuch a Septenary diſtribution of Time, or diviſion into Weeks, than there is for the dividing of a Day into Hours: And conſequently it muſt proceed from ſome Inſtitution, and from a very early Inſtitution, becauſe of what I have obſerved from the fore-recited Authors, who are of great Antiquity, eſpecially *Homer* and *Linus*: For *Homer* is ſuppoſed to have lived in or about the time of *Saul*, in the Year of the World 2940, and *Linus* in the time of the *Judges*, about the Year 1570. The conſideration of which doth make it probable that theſe Ancient Poets owed their Information to the general Tradition of the World, rather than to the *Jews*. Indeed *Ariſtobulus* the *Jew*, from whom *Euſebius* drew the aboveſaid Teſtimonies, ſaith theſe Poets had borrowed them from

from the *Jewiſh* Books. But if it be conſider'd how little the *Jewiſh* Books, the Scriptures, were known to the World before the Tranſlation of them by the Seventy into *Greek*, which was about 300 Years before the Birth of our Saviour; or how little the Opinions of the *Jews* themſelves before the Captivity were known abroad, it will hardly be conceived, that theſe things ſhould be known ſo early, and ſpoke of ſo poſitively by the *Greek* Poets, *Homer* and *Linus*, within ſo ſhort a time after the Inſtitution of the Sabbath at *Sinai*, as theſe two lived; for *Linus* muſt have lived within leſs than half an hundred Years after the time of *Moſes*; and *Homer* in leſs than 400. Where if we take the loweſt term, that of *Homer*, the *Jews* were hardly in a ſettled State, and no more in a Condition, than they were diſpoſed in their Temper, or permitted by their Religion, to inform other Nations in the Articles or Myſteries of their Religion. So that it ſeems very evident, that the Obſervation of the Seventh day for the Service of God, was an ancient and general Opinion, and eſpecially of thoſe who may be beſt preſumed to underſtand what had been the ſenſe of Mankind in the Ages before, or thoſe in which they lived. And if this was the

Opinion

Opinion of thoſe early Times, conformable to the Hiſtory of Scripture, we have ſufficient reaſon to offer this as an inſtance of a Revelation.

2. Another inſtance of Revelation is Sacrifices, and eſpecially thoſe of Expiation. Amongſt all the Rites and Uſages relating to Divine Worſhip, there are none that exceed theſe in their Antiquity (except the S bbath) or Extent.

For we no ſooner read of God's Reconciliation to Mankind, but that they offer'd Sacrifice; no ſooner of *Noah*'s Deliverance and Eſcape out of the Deluge, but he offer'd Sacrifice: And without doubt, as it begun, ſo it continued, and was as much diſperſed and obſerved among Mankind before the Flood, as after it. But how probable ſoever it is, that this Rite was thus univerſally obſerved before, yet that we are not ſo certain of, as we are of the Obſervation of it after the Flood, when there was no Age nor Nation where it was not to be found, how diſperſed ſoever they were; of which no tolerable Account is to be given, unleſs it be allowed to have been in uſe before the Diſperſion at *Babel*, and that it was of Divine Inſtitution. It muſt have been, I ſay, in uſe before that Diſperſion; for

for how could all Nations fall into one and the ſame Practice, and have the ſame Opinion of Sacrifices, when there is nothing in the Nature of the thing to lead them to it, if it had not been, that they had all deſcended from one Blood, from one Family, from one Body, by which means it was conveyed into all the ſeveral Branches iſſuing from it, and went along with them where-ever they went.

Now the queſtion is, Whence this ſhould ariſe, and what gave it this univerſal Acceptance and Authority? whether the Invention of ſome Eminent Perſons, ſuppoſe, in thoſe early Times? or whether it was by Revelation from God, and of his ſpecial Inſtitution?

There ſeems no great reaſon to think this Service ſhould proceed merely from the Invention of Men, even of thoſe pious and well-diſpoſed Perſons, ſince (as I have ſaid) there is nothing in the nature of the thing to lead to it For how could it be ſuppoſed that this ſhould be acceptable to Almighty God, which in it ſelf holds no Conformity, nor is at all ſutable to his Nature? *Will I eat the fleſh of bulls, and drink* Psalm 50. *the blood of goats?* Is a true repreſentation of it.

It might become a ſanguinary ſort of Dæmons, or falſe Gods, and wicked Spirits, to be pleaſed

pleaſed with the Fumes and Reakings of the Bleeding Sacrifice, as the Heathens generally thought: But men of any underſtanding would rather chuſe a *reaſonable Service* for the God that made them reaſonable Creatures, and might preſume another ſort of Sacrifice would be more acceptable than this, and acceptable without it, *viz.* a Sacrifice of Praiſe and Prayer, of a pure Mind, and a good Life, which the wiſer Heathens did in their Opinion exceedingly prefer. But as for the Sacrifices and Blood of Beaſts, ſuch as *Pythagoras* and *Plato* ſpoke of them often with regret and diſpleaſure; and others wonder'd how they firſt came into the World, as *Porphyry*, that wrote expreſly againſt them.

Euſeb. Præpar.

What Expreſſion could thereby be given, ſuppoſe, of mens gratitude to God for their Being, and their Preſervation? *Who of all Mankind is ſo ſtupidly credulous, ſo fooliſh, that can think the Gods delighted with ſuch a preſent of Bones, Gall, and Blood, which a hungry Dog would ſcarcely touch; and that they ſhould repay the favour to thoſe that offer it?* ſaid an ancient Heathen Poet.

Porphyr. περὶ ἀποχ. lib. 2. Sect. 58.

But if we deſcend to Expiatory Sacrifices, who could think that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could take away ſin*, and that God would accept of that as a fit Compenſation for their Crimes; the

the Blood of a Brute for that of a Man, the Life of one that is not in its own power, inſtead of him that was?

And if men were ſo weak as of their own accord to offer it; can we think the Almighty Creator would accept of what was for it ſelf only unbecoming his Majeſty, and be ſo highly delighted with it, as to teſtify his Acceptance of *Abel*'s by the deſcent of a Miraculous Fire to conſume it; and to *ſmell a ſweet ſavour* upon *Noah*'s Oblation; to appoint it as a ſign of his Covenant with *Abraham*; and laſtly, to embody it into the *Moſaical* Inſtitution? ἐνεπύρισε. So *Theodotion.*

It was enough, one would think, that the Majeſty of Heaven and Earth had accepted of the good will of the firſt Inventors, how poor and low ſoever the Invention was; but it was too great a Condeſcenſion to do by theſe as the Heathens by their Heroes, to tranſlate them into the number of their Deities; too much to have ſuch a Mark of the Favour of Heaven, as none of the Divine Inſtitutions could have more.

But why ſhould we think ſo meanly of thoſe *Antideluvian* Patriarchs, of *Adam* and *Abel*, *Enoch* and *Noah*, &c. the firſt Inventors or Encouragers of this way of Worſhip? At this rate happier far were the Inventions of *Adah*, *Jubal*, and *Tubal-*

Cain, that taught others how to order Cattel, to handle the Harp and the Organ, to work in Braſs and Iron; for theſe did ſerve either the Ne-
Gen. 4. 20. ceſſities or Pleaſures of Mankind, and were ſuitable to their nature and condition: But to offer Beſtial Sacrifices to an Infinite Spirit, was as if we ſhould preſent Mankind with the Entertainments and Pleaſures of the Brutes; and ſo it cannot be thought that Men (how low ſoever their Underſtandings were) would think the Blood of Beaſts a decent Preſent to their Creator, which indeed would not be ſo to their Superiors here.

But we have another ſort of Character of thoſe Holy Men, who were Perſons of great Knowledge and vaſt Experience; who both received their Religion from the Almighty, were the great Props and Stays of it in their Generation, and to whom the care of tranſmitting it to Poſterity was committed; and for which reaſon, as well as others, God ſeemed to have protracted their Lives to ſo vaſt an Extent. They were ſuch as were eminent for their Piety; as *Abel*'s Faith is one of the renowned Inſtances, *Heb.* 11. and *Enoch* is ſaid to *walk with God*, and was in an extraordinary way rewarded for it. Such again were they as were endued with the Spirit

Spirit of Prophecy, as *Adam*, *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*. Gen. 5. 20, 28. Gen. 9. 26. Jude 14. 2 Pet. 2. 5.

And therefore it cannot in reaſon be ſuppoſed that ever they ſhould think the offering the Blood, and burning the Fleſh of a Beaſt, to be a fit expreſſion of their Gratitude to Almighty God, or a means to obtain his Favour by way of Expiation for their Sins, without his Inſtitution.

It is then (as far as I conceive) evident, that Sacrifices, of what kind ſoever, were not invented by men. But if they were not invented by men, How came they to be admitted, and at laſt ſo much to obtain in the world?

I anſwer, They were of God's own Inſtitution; and therefore were received by the Patriarchs, and accepted by himſelf.

But then it may reaſonably be demanded, Why they ſhould be thus honoured by a Divine Legiſlation and Authority, when it is allowed that they are in themſelves not ſuitable to his Nature?

I anſwer, They were inſtituted as thoſe Sacrifices were Typical, and had reſpect to a greater Sacrifice, that of Chriſt. And therefore 'tis obſervable, That as Almighty God for the Comfort of *Adam*, and preventing his Deſpair, (as has been before

ſhewed) did immediately after his Expoſtulation with him, and Sentence paſs'd upon him, reveal his intention to pardon him, and the Means by which it was to be procured and ratified, *The Seed of the Woman*: ſo in conſequence of this, and to ſhew their Faith in that Promiſe, we read in the next Chapter, of their Sacrifices and Offerings which they brought unto the Lord, as a Repreſentation of what they for their Apoſtacy had deſerved, and ſhould have ſuffered, had not the Divine Mercy interpoſed.

Now if we have repreſented this aright, we have a fair account of an Expiatory Sacrifice, and how it came to take ſuch place among men, and to be ſo univerſally received.

We have a reaſon again how and why it came to be framed into the Law of *Moſes*; and why theſe and the Rites belonging to them, were made a principal part of it, and have thereby a Key to unlock many Myſteries in that Law, and to anſwer many Difficulties about it, when it is a *ſhadow of good things to come*.

By this means again we come to underſtand the ſpecial Providence of God, that this was ſo much preſerved and ſo univerſally diſperſed and received among mankind.

By

By this means again we have a fair account how the Doctrine of the Croſs, and the Notion of our Saviour's Death as an Expiatory Sacrifice, came to be ſoon entertained among the *Gentiles*; for being of God's Inſtitution, as he preſerved it, ſo being thus preſerved, it became an excellent introduction, and prepared Mankind for the belief and reception of our Redemption by Chriſt.

To the ſame Original may the Firſt Fruits, Prieſthood, and Tenths be referr'd; the firſt of which was obſerved from the time of *Abel*, *Gen.* 3. and the two laſt long before the time of the *Moſaical* Law; and therefore are to be derived from an ancient Inſtitution.

But becauſe it may be thought theſe Inſtances may be liable to exception, foraſmuch as they are ſometimes diſputed among thoſe themſelves that do contend for a Revelation, I ſhall proceed to

IV. Sort of Evidence, which is Supernatural; and that is either it ſelf a Revelation, or the Proof of it; of the former is Prophecy; of the latter, Miracles.

1. Prophecy, or the foretelling things to come; whatever time they are to exiſt in, near or remote. I add this latter Clauſe to it, to prevent all Exception, and to diſtinguiſh Prophecy truly ſo called, from Sagacity, or Human Provi-

Providence; which from precedent Obſervations and proximate Cauſes, may be often fortunate in its Conjectures or Predictions. But now as to Infinite Power all things are alike poſſible and eaſy, and there is nothing great or little, more or leſs, with reſpect to it; ſo to Infinite Knowledge, to which *one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day*, all things, the remoteſt as well as neareſt, are alike preſent; and there is nothing diſtant or near with reſpect to it. And therefore whereever the true Spirit of Prophecy is, the ſame Power that can foretell what ſhall happen to morrow, could, if he ſo pleaſed, as eaſily foretell what ſhall happen a Thouſand Years hence; ſince *all things are alike naked and opened unto him with whom we have to do.* Now this ſort of Knowledge can proceed from nothing leſs than him, who as he knows all things, ſo has all Cauſes in his own Power, and can foreſee how they will operate, and what ſhall be the Event of ſuch Operations, or can diſpoſe them to it as he pleaſeth, whatever the Cauſes be, whether (as we uſually ſay) they are Voluntary, Neceſſary, or Contingent; and being thus peculiar to him, and his ſole Prerogative, 'tis no leſs than a Species of Divine Revelation. And therefore as none can know the

the Certainty of ſuch Futurities and Events but God, ſo none can foretell them but ſuch as he is pleaſed to reveal them to. From whence it was that *Plato* ſomewhere calls Prophecy, κοινωνία, a *Communication* or *Fellowſhip* with God. For ſuppoſe now we ſhould ſet before us any *Epocha* or Character of Time, which the Prophecy reſpects; the 160 Years from *Iſaiah*'s naming of *Cyrus*, to his Decree for building *Jeruſalem*, *Iſa.* 44. 28. Or the 350 Years from the Prophet's naming *Joſiah*, to the time he defiled thoſe Idolatrous Places, 1 *Kings* 13. 2. 2 *Kings* 23. 16. Or the 490 Years in *Daniel*'s Weeks, from his time to the Death of Meſſiah, *Dan.* 9. 24. What an infinite number of intercurrent Paſſages muſt there be before it be brought in its proper ſeaſon to its accompliſhment? And how amazing a ſight would it be, if we could lay our hand upon the Clue of the Prophecy at its firſt ſetting out, and follow it making its way through all Oppoſitions and Interferings, to the laſt Period and Completion! But then if we turn our Thoughts to the chief Subject of Revelation, the Prophecy of the Incarnation of our Saviour, as it began immediately upon the Fall, and paſſed along through the 61 Generations, for 4000 Years together, it would be like the diſperſed

Parts

Parts of a Human Body, to the Time and State of the Reſurrection, that are carried ſafe and entire through all Transformations; and at laſt when the *Sea and the Grave* are called upon to *give up their dead*, all the Atoms and Particles are recalled from their ſeveral Vehicles or Tribes they were joined to, and fall into the ſame Compoſition as before in this preſent ſtate. Much ſuch a Subject have we before us, which after various Windings and Turnings, and an infinite Succeſſion of Cauſes and Events, we read, *That it might be fulfilled,------and as it was ſpoken by the mouth of the holy prophets, which have been ſince the world began*, Luke 1. 70.

So that as many Prophecies as we have, or the world ever had, ſo many Evidences have we of a Supernatural and Divine Revelation.

And this all Mankind have had a belief of, as is manifeſt from the Oracles they conſulted upon all emergent occaſions; many of which were very ancient, as *Herodotus* tells us that of *Jupiter Hammon* in *Lybia* was. I acknowledge that theſe were full of Impoſture, and deſpiſed for it by the Wiſer part of the Heathens, ſuch as *Tully*, *Lib.* 1, 2. *de Divinat.* and detected, as *Euſebius* ſhews, *Præpar. Evang. l.* 4. *Init. & l.* 9. *c.* 5.

And

And I mention theſe, not that I eſteem them of any Authority; rather the contrary; but to ſhew what the World thought of Prophecy, and which even thoſe Philoſophers that diverted themſelves with the Miſtakes and Impoſtures of their own Oracles, never queſtioned whether ever there were any true Prophecy, but always allowed it, and took it for granted.

So that the Impoſtures of their own Pretenders never engaged them ſo far, as to call in queſtion the Veracity of all Prophecy, or to deny it where it was able to juſtify it ſelf.

Thus far I have endeavoured to ſhew, That there has been a Revelation, antecedent to, or where there was no Written Revelation: And the Arguments and Inſtances have been ſuch as were proper to thoſe Circumſtances; ſuch as we are led to by the Light of Nature, and Human Obſervation: and therefore tho they receive Light and Confirmation from a Written Revelation, are not ſuppoſed to depend upon it for their Evidence. And if this Point has been hereby made out and proved, we then find that God has *at ſundry times and in divers manners*, revealed himſelf to mankind *by the Prophets* and inſpired Perſons, from the beginning through the

Ante-deluvian and *Poſt-deluvian* Times, till the Promulgation of a Written Law by *Moſes*.

If it be ſaid, That theſe are far from amounting to a Certainty, and from giving us an Infallible Aſſurance of a Revelation, ſince ſome of them are diſputed even among thoſe that own a Revelation; as the Original of the Sabbath, and Sacrifices; and at the moſt are but Probable Arguments.

1. I anſwer, Probability is a fair Step to Certainty; and I may after all affirm, That the Account here offered is the beſt that can be given of thoſe Inſtances.

2. There are ſuch Arguments as are taken from the Conſideration of God's Nature; and there cannot be a ſtronger, than what is fetch'd from the nature of things.

3. There are other Inſtances that are equivalent to a Revelation, and can proceed from no lower a Principle; ſuch are Speech and Common Notions; the former of which in the Circumſtances before-recited, muſt be from Divine Inſpiration, and the latter from a Divine Impreſſion.

4. There are thoſe things which when they accompany what we call a Revelation, prove the Truth and Certainty of it; and being recorded

corded in a Written Revelation, become of the Body of it, and they are Miracles.

5. There are others that are the Matter of Revelation, and they are Prophecies, eſpecially ſuch as are carried along in a continued Train, and mutually confirm each other.

6. There are others that are not only conſonant to what we own to be a Revelation, but to Human Teſtimonies; and being confirmed by both, are of great Authority.

All which laid together, give us, I may ſay, unqueſtionable Evidence, That there has been a Revelation, or that God has made himſelf and his Will known to the World by Perſons choſen out, and inſpired, and commiſſioned by him.

And this is a good Preparative and Introduction for what is to follow, *viz.* That there is a ſpecial Revelation, and that Revelation recorded and tranſmitted by Writing to the World; which is a Point in Reſerve, and that will in order be diſcourſed upon.

F I N I S.

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